

STATEMENT OF RALPH M. GORSLINE  
MADE ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1926, TO  
MR. PFEIFFER, PUT IN NARRATIVE FORM.

On the night of September 14, 1922, I left my home shortly after eight o'clock and went to the Y.M.C.A. to see how the bowling alleys, which were being repaired, were getting along. I saw two friends of mine playing billiards, so I sat down and watched them. One was Hugh Torbet, the Raritan River Railroad Station man, and the other A.B. Wright. I do not know where he is now. I watched them until about half past nine, then I went up front and looked at a couple of papers and went back and they had gone, so I went downstairs and talked to Pop Tribbet, a "Y" employee, about the bowling alleys. I said, "Pop, put on the lights and let me see", so we went in and looked them over and finally came out about five or ten minutes to ten. We stood talking for a minute or two on the inside of the "Y" and I said goodnight to him. A man named Jache said he saw me in the "Y". Just as I reached the sidewalk I met Miss Rastall, and asked her where she was going. She said she was going home and had just come from the State Theatre. I said, "Come on, I have my car and will run you up." It took me two or three minutes to get started, as I had some trouble with the lights or the starter. We were in my green Apperson Jack Rabbit open car. The headlights were amber color and very poor. When they were on full they looked like poor dimmers. I said, "Shall we take a little spin?". She said, "It's rather late", and I said, "Well, we'll run by the landing bridge", so we did. I think we went up George Street to Hamilton, up Hamilton to College, up College Avenue beyond her house, through George Street to Landing Lane, then across to Easton Avenue, then up to the top of the hill. I said, "It's after ten o'clock, probably it is late. We'll go down and stop down below". It is a busy place over there with cars passing going to and fro. We didn't know who they were or what they were, so as we drove down I said, "We'll stop in here a minute" and pulled in at DeRussey's Lane, and just as I did, Miss Rastall did not recall this, I think it was a Ford car came out. I could just about get by but had to look out for the ditch. The ditch is on the right and my car has a long wheelbase and I could not get around as easily as a small Ford, so I remember seeing the lights and looking to the right to see about the ditch. I imagine it was a Ford. We met it just at the corner of DeRussey's Lane and Easton Avenue. It was coming out as we went in and I had to swerve to avoid hitting it. I do not know which way it turned and did not see any cars parked on Easton Avenue or in the Lane. We drove from the Y.M.C.A. to DeRussey's Lane at probably 20 or 25 miles an hour, not over that. We went in DeRussey's Lane until we struck the first little lane that went off to the left. It was about 200' in from Easton Avenue. I am sure it is the lane we went in, because there was a big pile of wood I could see ahead of me and there were some big bushes on the right of this lane, "shoemakers", poison vine or poison shrub. Miss Rastall said she didn't like it there, it was



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entirely too dark. I said it was too dark, we would sit in there just a few seconds and then pull out. I shut off my motor and put off the lights. The other lane is the one they call Phillips' Lane. We went in the lane and parked about a car length from DeRussey's Lane. The lane was only wide enough for one car and where we were parked was 700' from the crabapple tree. We had only been there a couple of minutes when we heard a mumbling of men's voices, which seemed to me to come from down back of the Phillips' farm house. A few seconds afterwards we heard one shot and a woman scream, "Oh! Oh!", and then there were three shots. She kept on screaming even after the three shots but more sort of a moan. Miss Rastall was very much startled and I said, "Don't pay any attention to that, it is only some Italians down back of the farm house." That is what I thought myself - a quarrel. They had these quarrels up there. "Well", she said, "let's pull out." I said, "Now wait a minute, we don't want to rush away from here, we'll take our time", so I just backed quietly out, put my lights on, and went out. I backed right down DeRussey's Lane and then put my lights on. There is a little incline there and I could slide the car out. We were too far away to tell whether the people who were mumbling were quarreling. It sounded just like men talking in low tones. We were too far away to discern any quarreling. We could not distinguish any words. I don't know whether there was quarreling or not. I just heard this mumbling of voices. I know that Miss Rastall says that the sounds came from back of the car, but we were too far away to hear and you could not tell the direction. We heard the ~~quarreling~~ a minute or two after we had been there and it was probably three or four minutes after we arrived before we heard the first shot. While I was in the lane I saw no one, heard no one, no one saw me that I know of and I had no conversation with anyone. I didn't turn my lights on until we slid out of Phillips' Lane into DeRussey's Lane. When I drove in my lights were on until the car stopped. While we were in the lane I saw no automobile except the one that passed us as we went in, no person or persons and heard no wagon. I didn't see Mrs. Gibson or any mule. I didn't hear a mule bray. As far as I can recall, it was a pretty dark night, I don't think it was rainy, but I don't think the stars were out. I don't recall whether I went back by the landing bridge or by Easton Avenue, but we went right to Miss Rastall's house on Senior Street. We didn't talk on the way home about what we would say if asked if we had been out that night.

I next saw Miss Rastall Saturday afternoon, when I called for her and we went down to the Phillips Farm. Out there I don't think I said anything to her about what had happened Thursday night. I think on Sunday, after church, I said we might have seen something if we had turned on our lights. Possibly I said it Saturday afternoon. The next time I saw her was after church on Sunday morning. Then I said, "We know just exactly now what happened. Now for your sake and my sake we had simply better say nothing about it. You know that I was at the 'Y' until ten o'clock and I know that you were at the State Theatre until ten. We didn't have any appointment and met by chance. I asked to drive you home and you got in the house about twenty minutes after ten or thereabouts. I was home about ten thirty, or a few minutes



after. We know that is all right. Now that is our story and I shall always stick to it to protect your interests, so we always did. The only way I know I got home at ten thirty is from following out the way we went up there and the length of time we were in the lane. I don't suppose we were there more than six or eight or ten minutes. I did not look at a watch or clock when I got home. Mrs. Coraline was out. I think it was about twenty five minutes of eleven when I got home, because I park my car at the State Highway Garage and it takes me five or six minutes to walk across. I went to bed and slept in the same room with Mrs. Coraline, so my time is accounted for for the rest of the night.

When the case came up I went over it pretty thoroughly with Mrs. Coraline. It would take about three minutes from the lane to Miss Rastall's and from eleven or twelve minutes from Miss Rastall's to my house.

I did speak to Jacob VanPelt, but I thought it was a couple of weeks after the murder. He says I came there Friday, the next morning after we had been in the lane. His statement is that I said to him, "Well, Jake, I was out last night in DeRussey's Lane and, by golly, I bet there was a murder out there, because we heard some voices and some shots and screams." He asked me about the girl and I said, "No, nothing like that". He said, "Oh, don't kid me, I bet you were too scared." I did not tell him who the girl was. VanPelt had done my repair work and we had gone fishing together. According to his statement, he said to me, "You were a little late this morning" before I spoke to him. When VanPelt confronted me up in Somerville, I said, "Why, Jake, you know that is a damn lie. It was a couple of weeks after we were talking about it." That is my recollection but I am not perfectly clear. I never told VanPelt I saw anyone up there that night, because I did not see anyone. However, VanPelt has it in his statement. VanPelt says that he knew me, there was the kindest feeling between us and that we had been close friends, that he had done my repair work and that we had been fishing together and that about 8.30 of the morning of Friday, September 15th, I came to his place of business and seemed very much excited and said that I had been out at DeRussey's Lane with Miss Catherine Rastall and had heard shots and the screams. I don't think VanPelt has said that I recognized anyone out in the lane. I never turned my headlights on. I did say in Somerville that if I turned on my searchlight I might have seen what was doing. Inspector Underwood has said that I told VanPelt that I turned my headlights on, but so far as I know VanPelt has not said that I said so. I was going to turn my headlights on but Miss Rastall said, "Don't do anything like that." We were both a little bit worried, so we did not do it. I did not turn the searchlight on at all that evening. I am positive of this. It is absolutely untrue that I told Underwood that I was in the Phillips' Lane within 50' of the scene of the murder. I have always maintained that my car was parked in the



one place, which Walsh, Underwood, Burke and a New York Journal photographer paced off with me as 700' from the crabapple tree. The Mirror is a Hearst paper and sometimes I think that the stenographer over at Somerville is representing either the Mirror or the Journal. Underwood and Walsh give to the newspapers everything they have and passed out our statements as soon as they were made. I have not seen Simpson, but saw Wolfe and Hayes yesterday. Underwood questioned me alone. I had Mr. Jacob Lefferts, my cousin from Matawan, who is a lawyer, with me there for a while to take care of my bail. Wolfe and Hayes only asked a couple of questions. One was about my being seen at the Penn. Railroad Station at one o'clock Friday morning and that Mrs. Hall got out of her sedan and went in and telephoned.

A New Brunswick policeman was supposed to have seen me crouching down in the back with my hat pulled down over my face. My answer to the question was absolutely no. The other question was as to what Minnie Clark's duties were around the church. I told them she was a Sunday School teacher, belonged to different women's organizations and was active in women's affairs. I also said she did not to my knowledge clean up Mr. Hall's study or his desk, etc. I told them that I never saw any correspondence between Mrs. Mills and Mr. Hall and that is absolutely true. They accused me of taking such notes to Mrs. Hall and I said I hadn't and my answer is true. I never told Mrs. Hall directly or indirectly of any improper relationship between Mr. Hall and Mrs. Mills. I never knew it existed. I talked with you one Saturday afternoon four years ago at the Bearman factory for a couple of hours and probably did tell you that I had once spoken to Mr. Hall about his being with Mrs. Mills a good deal and that he put his arm on my shoulder and said, "Oh, Ralph, you were putting thoughts in your head that are not mine", or something of that nature. They asked me about this in Somerville and I told them I didn't know anything about it. However, I was just thinking about that statement to you because I just heard a rumor at that time and think I did say something to him about it. I never knew or suspected any meretricious relations between Hall and Mrs. Mills. I knew him pretty well and went camping with him. I never thought he was over-sexed and in our camping we never mentioned a thing about women. Mrs. Hall has never done anything to make me believe or even think that she knew of any improper relationship between Hall and Mrs. Mills and I have never heard of anything that would make me believe that she could know of it. I never spoke to Mrs. Hall regarding Mr. Hall in any way and for the last year before the murder saw her very seldom and nearly always in the church. I think we had a choir night up at the house during the last year before the murder and that is the only time I remember being at the house. That choir night was some time during the winter of 1921-22. Since the murder I have had no conversations with Mrs. Hall and have simply said to her "how do you do" and passed the time of day. I have not been in her house since the murder



and have not discussed it or any of its features with Mrs. Hall. The only statement I ever gave you (Mr. Pfeiffer) was four years ago, and that statement is the only one I ever gave to anyone representing Mrs. Hall. I never saw DeMartini.

I had been in the neighborhood of DeRussey's Lane with Miss Rastall a couple of times before September 14th but I don't think we ever went into the lane before. I have been out with her since the murder, but a long while ago. My car was burned up in October, 1922 and I did not have another until January, 1923. My car burning up was purely an accident and had nothing to do with an attempt to conceal anything. Ducet, the man who burned up the car, is up at Somerville today. I have not talked with Mr. VanPelt since he gave a statement to the Prosecutor. When he confronted me in Somerville nothing came up about the statement by me that I had seen anybody in the lane that night. The only thing that came up when we were confronted was whether I talked to him on Friday morning or two weeks later. After VanPelt had confronted me and I knew that Miss Rastall had given a correct statement, I told them everything I knew and have now told them the whole truth. I am not concealing any fact that has anything to do with the murder or the solution and have only been trying up to this time to shield Miss Rastall. When I was convinced that she had told the truth, then I told the truth, and there is nothing in our relationship or any other reason to lead me to conceal anything further. Miss Rastall has her own car now and can go home when she wants. That is how the thing started. Mr. Hall asked me to take different ones home, but that has been done away with for three years.

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I had a 32 caliber revolver many years ago, but since several years before the murder. I still have a 45 caliber, which I got when I was captain in a local company during the war. It is right over in my drawer. Some time before the murder I bought several 38 caliber, long barreled revolvers from Camp Raritan for men in the factory who wanted to keep them in the house for protection and I had a way to buy them from Camp Raritan for these men at \$5.50 apiece. I had no 38 caliber gun in my possession at the time of the murders. They never asked me a word in Somerville about guns, which struck me as funny, as I have every medal the United States gives for marksman, sharpshooter and expert rifleman. In Somerville they tried to confront me with the fact that the attorneys for the defense were going to fasten the crime upon me and Jimmy Mills, at which I said I was rather surprised to hear it. Mr. Petit, of course, had told me beforehand all about it.



My cousin has several ideas with respect to the case and was wondering whether he might not be of service to you. You could talk with him just as lawyers together. Of course, the crime has to be fastened on somebody. I can't see any further than the pig woman. At Somerville they asked me who I thought committed the crime. My answer was that four years ago I thought it was Schneider and Hayes, through mistaken identity. (Then ensued a short discussion as to relation of the Gibson woman to the crime.) I did not confer or consult directly or indirectly with any representative of Mrs. Hall before going to Somerville and this is the first time I have made any statement to a representative of Mrs. Hall in the 1926 investigation. The only previous statement was the statement I made to you, Mr. Pfeiffer, when we were alone together, and which was not taken down by a stenographer.

M BOND

GOTHAM

QUALITY

KEITH